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MEMBER DEVELOPMENT STEERING GROUP AGENDA

WEDNESDAY 2 DECEMBER 2015 AT 7.30 PM
DBC GADE ROOM - CIVIC CENTRE

The Councillors listed below are requested to attend the above meeting, on the day and at the time and place stated, to consider the business set out in this agenda.

Councillors G G Adshead, Banks, Conway, Douris, P Hearn, Hicks, Howard and Taylor (Chairman)

AGENDA

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

To receive any apologies for absence.

2. MINUTES (Pages 3 - 8)

Members are asked to agree the minutes of the meeting held on 1 October 2015.

3. PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT PLANS - OPTIONS

Members are asked to consider the proposals for PDP's

4. TRAINING PLEDGE (Page 9)

Training pledge is an alternative to Member Charter Accreditation and therefore Members are asked to approve the pledge

5. MEMBERS TRAINING FEEDBACK (Pages 10 - 14)

Members to consider the feedback from recent training sessions

6. QUARTERLY BUDGET UPDATE (Pages 15 - 16)

Members to note the budget update

7. MEMBER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME 2015-16 (Pages 17 - 18)

Members to note the training programme

8. MDSG WORK PROGRAMME (Pages 19 - 20)

Members to offer suggestions for items to add to the work programme for 2015/16

9. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday 2 March 2016

MINUTES

MEMBER DEVELOPMENT STEERING GROUP

1 OCTOBER 2015

Present:

Councillors: G Adshead, Banks, Conway,
Douris, P Hearn, Hicks,
Howard and Taylor
(Chairman)

Officers: Michelle Anderson Corporate Support Team Leader
(Democracy)
Trudi Coston Member Support Officer

The meeting began at 7.30 pm

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

2. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 4 June 2015 were agreed by the Members present and then signed by the Chairman.

3. ANNUAL TRAINING REPORT

M Anderson advised that members didn't achieve their training target for 2014/15 however that was expected in the final year of their term and she felt positive that we would achieve this year's target. She said we kept within the £8k training budget for 14/15 and made some significant savings. This year the budget has increased to £11k to incorporate the cost of PDP's and essential training for new and existing members. She explained that we were still part of the Herts Member Development Network group and the next meeting was scheduled for 22 October which DBC were hosting. She invited the Chairman to the meeting, which he accepted but advised he may be late.

Councillor Adshead asked how much of a saving was made from the £8k budget. M Anderson said she didn't have the figures to hand but she would let him know.

Councillor Taylor explained that at a recent Conservative group meeting he was asking members to let him and Councillor Harden know of any problems with the iPads so they can feed them back to Gary Osler in the I.T. department and he can provide them with further training. Councillor Taylor highlighted that the support he had received from Member Support, in particular Catriona and Trudi, had been exceptional.

Councillor Hicks said the problems seemed to be with Good rather than the iPad.

Councillor Adshead agreed with Councillor Hicks as he couldn't access Good Share and added that there were limits to the iPads and he finds the software frustrating.

M Anderson said the introduction of iPads had been discussed for several years and it was a huge step to take. She said members were doing really well and although there are a few people that aren't keen most are embracing it. She advised that Member Support had booked a two hour slot every Tuesday morning from 10am-12pm for members to come in the office and ask any questions they may have and receive additional support. She encouraged members to share their knowledge with each other if they're confident in using the iPad.

Councillor Hicks said if all the software was up and running properly in the first instance then less people would have had issues.

M Anderson advised that we were all still learning and we will continue to have teething problems but once we know about each issue we can resolve it.

Councillor Conway said she loved her iPad apart from not being able to see when capital letters are on or off.

Councillor P Hearn said she found spreadsheets difficult to read on the iPad. M Anderson advised that was something they were looking at before the budget time approaches.

Councillor Taylor said he finds life easier with the iPad and too much paper was wasted in the printing of each agenda.

Councillor Adshead asked if they could have meeting dates entered in to their Good calendar. M Anderson said that was part of the next stage they were looking in to.

Councillor Hicks asked if he was able to change the colours of his calendar entries. M Anderson said she would have to investigate and come back to him.

Councillor Hicks asked if he was able to search for a particular word within a document. M Anderson said she would come back to him on that matter.

Members were advised not to accept the software updates on the iPads.

Actions:

- Member support to advise the amount of underspend for last year's training budget.
- Members to advise Councillors Taylor and Harden of any issues with their iPads so they can feedback to I.T.
- Member support to investigate if it is possible to change the colour of calendar entries.
- Member support to investigate if it is possible to search for a word within a document on the iPad.

4. MEMBER DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY 2015-2018

M Anderson explained that in 2010 they signed up to Member Charter and one aspect of it is to have a strategy. This was reviewed half way through the term but now needed updating. She said it incorporated the new aims and visions of the future

and the document was available for anyone to view if they had any queries on the matter.

Councillor Taylor said they had reached above standard with Member Charter and the adjudicators were very impressed. He explained that they didn't feel Charter Plus was beneficial as it was much more work for a third of the information and it was very costly so they stuck with Member Charter.

Councillor P Hearn asked if Town and Parish councillors were invited to our training sessions. M Anderson advised that they were invited if it was relevant and beneficial to their role.

Councillor P Hearn felt new members would benefit from a training session with the Clean, Safe and Green team. T Coston advised this was something they were hoping to arrange.

M Anderson explained that there was a section on the council's website called 'how to become a councillor' and it included quotes from three councillors, two of which are no longer councillors. She asked if there was anyone present that would like to volunteer to be part of that webpage or if members would prefer it to be opened up to all councillors. Following a brief discussion members' decided they would prefer all members were invited to take part.

Actions:

- Member support to send an email to all members asking for volunteers to help with the 'how to become a councillor' webpage.

5. MEMBERS TRAINING FEEDBACK

T Coston said that the second induction event went really well and the majority of feedback was positive. She explained that the priority had been to focus on the essential training courses such as licensing, development control and appeals, which most members had attended, and then concentrate on important subjects like data protection, housing and finance. She said the number of attendees is increasing slowly but was still quite low and could be improved.

Councillor Taylor asked the group to encourage members to complete the feedback forms at training sessions.

T Coston advised that the feedback forms were summarised and sent on to the trainers so they were important and useful to more people than just Member Support.

Councillor Adshead queried if text messages were being sent to members to remind them of upcoming training courses. T Coston advised they were being sent. G Adshead said he hadn't received any. T Coston said Member Support had circulated an email in July asking members to opt-in to the text message service but she agreed to re-send it.

Councillor Hicks said the CIL training was very interesting but he felt it would have been useful to have examples of an actual development and where the money goes to put it all in to context. Councillor Howard echoed Councillor Hicks' view. T Coston said this would be fed back to the trainer before another session is booked for next year.

Councillor P Hearn referred to the licensing training and said that Ross Hill was an excellent presenter.

Councillor Taylor referred to the information security/data protection course and noted that although there is nothing in the constitution that says members can't use Facebook, they are advised not to as some of the content can lead to difficult situations.

Actions:

- Member support to send another email to all councillors asking them to opt-in to text message reminders for member development sessions.

6. QUARTERLY BUDGET UPDATE

M Anderson advised that half of the budget for this financial year had been spent which was detailed in the report and the majority of what's remaining would be used for PDP's next year. She said the remaining courses scheduled for 2015/16 were all internal and therefore wouldn't be at a cost. She advised councillors to let Member Support know if there are any courses they would like to go on and we can arrange it for them.

Councillor Taylor asked what the annual conference was that one member had attended. M Anderson said she would look in to it and let him know.

Councillor Hicks said he attended the 'being an effective councillor' and noted that it would have been cheaper if we had a membership with the LGIU. T Coston advised that she believed the membership fee was more than the cost of the training and members didn't attend enough of the LGIU's courses to make the membership fee worthwhile.

Councillor P Hearn felt that the housing appeals training was a waste of money now there is a new process. She said they had been treated badly as a panel and weren't spoken to very well. She said that Councillor Bassadone wasn't informed of any changes despite being a chairman for appeals for 18 years.

Councillor Taylor said as Chairman of the Audit committee he meets with the relevant officers once a month to go through any issues, changes, etc.

Councillor Conway felt there was a breakdown in communication amongst members and officers.

M Anderson explained that Member Support weren't aware of any of the plans to change the appeals process but we needed to arrange the training swiftly in case an appeal was needed. She said it was a shame to have wasted all that money.

Councillor Douris arrived at 8.34 pm.

Actions:

- Member support to check the details of the annual conference one member had attended.

7. PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN UPDATE

M Anderson explained that at December's meeting they would be bringing along details and quotes from three different providers to carry out PDP's for members in February/March 2016. She said they were looking at different providers rather than ones used in the past and looking at changing the process so it's completely new and fresh. She asked whether the group felt the PDP's should be aimed at the new members first or opened up to all members and be available on a first-come first-served basis.

Councillor Taylor felt PDP's were no good if it was just a tick-box exercise. He said member's progress needed to be reviewed regularly.

Councillor Howard said there must be a review process to see what achievements members were making.

Councillor Douris said the timings of the review process were important as if there was too long of a gap in between it would lose significance. He said the process must be smart, strategic and relevant.

M Anderson said the meeting with a potential provider this morning made them realise that the process needed to change and be made more meaningful. She said a progress review meeting was a must.

Councillor Douris said there were hidden values of being a councillor, one being the education you take away with you and it personally costs them nothing.

Councillor Banks felt that members needed to be committed to their development plans otherwise it's just a waste of time and money. She said it was best to focus on the ones that really want it.

Councillor Hicks said that if all 51 councillors did want to put themselves forward for training courses that there wouldn't be enough in the budget for it. M Anderson replied it was surprising how many councillors wanted similar training courses.

Councillor Adshead said that despite many councillors requesting a particular training course only a few of them actually attend.

Councillor Adshead queried if there was a possibility of increasing the budget if there was an appetite for more training. M Anderson said it could be considered.

M Anderson said the committee would be informed of any progress. She added that the group would be expected to make a decision on the process to be followed and which provider to use, at its meeting in December.

8. MEMBER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME 2015/16

M Anderson advised that the Mental Health First Aid training scheduled for Tuesday 6 October and Thursday 8 October had been postponed and would need to be rescheduled when the relevant officer returned to work.

Councillor Douris said it was frustrating when sessions were cancelled as he would have booked out that time in his diary to then find it has been postponed.

T Coston said it was also frustrating for them as they have turned down requests from officers that want to do training, due to the lack of availability in the training programme.

M Anderson asked members if they could encourage their colleagues to attend member development sessions and in particular the Budget Setting Process training with James Deane on 22 October 2015.

Actions:

- Member support to advise the new dates for the Mental Health First Aid training once it has been rescheduled.

9. MDSG WORK PROGRAMME

There were no changes or additions to the work programme.

10. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 2 December 2015.

The meeting finished at 9.15 pm.



Member Development Pledge

Dacorum Borough Council is an authority which is open to learning and committed to make development opportunities available to elected members.

Members will be supported to engage in learning and development activities which enhance and broaden their skills and knowledge to meet the range of duties set out in the Members' role descriptions. Dacorum Borough Council believes that confident and well-informed Members are best placed to deliver quality services to the residents and businesses in their wards and across the whole Borough.

The Member Development Programme is overseen by the Member Development Steering Group, who lead on member development at the Council.

All Members can expect:

- Clear role descriptions as a ward councillor and for any specific role taken on (e.g. as Chairman of a committee, as Leader of a party etc.)
- The opportunity to complete a Personal Development Plan to identify existing strengths/ skills and any additional learning needs and to request any training/development needed to fulfil their role(s) as a councillor
- To be offered a structured and timely programme of development opportunities that uses a range of learning styles and may be delivered by internal or external providers (as is most appropriate)

New Members can expect:

- A well structured Induction Programme to familiarise themselves with Dacorum as a Council

Members are [encouraged] [expected] to:

- Play an active part in identifying their own learning/development needs
- Take advantage of development opportunities appropriate to their roles and level of experience/ expertise
- Approach development through a range of learning styles (taught courses, on-line or E learning, Action Learning Sets, self-directed study etc.)
- Commit to training/development events and ensure that cancellation costs are not incurred
- Give feedback on training events and share learning with peers
- Play a role in the learning/ development of their peers where appropriate

SIGNED on behalf of Members by the Leaders of all the political groups at Dacorum Borough Council

.....
Cllr Andrew Williams
Conservative Group

.....
Cllr Ron Tindall
Liberal Democrats Group

.....
Cllr Tony Fethney
Labour Group

Agenda Item 5

Date: 22 October

Event: Budget setting process

FEEDBACK ON TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT

Attended: 25 Returned Feedback forms: 25

Objectives:

- Key financial concepts in Local Government
- The Budget Cycle
- Financial risks facing the council
- The role of Officers
- The role of Member

STRENGTHS

- Well attended
- Comprehensive presentation x2
- Kept to less than 1 hour
- Organised presentation with clear agenda
- Clear & concise
- Easy to digest x2
- James Deane speaks clearly & projects his voice well which is vital for people like me sitting at the back of the room
- Very clear presentation x2
- Questions well answered comprehensively
- Excellent slides
- Very good delivery from James Deane x2
- Very good timing and length of presentation
- Knowledge and data from James Deane x3
- The importance of members having input on the councils finances
- Excellent detail to understand finance
- Well set up and easy to follow
- Helpful slides – look forward to receiving them
- Clear answers to questions
- Excellent, clear visual slides x2
- Clarity
- Very informative x2
- A good overview which put into context the process
- Clear examples to explain each point
- Plenty of opportunity to ask questions x2

WEAKNESSES

- James speaking too fast
- Impossible to make notes and follow the presentation at the same time x3
- Shortage of seats
- Too much headline and not enough depth
- The event was reasonably well attended which meant there was a shortage of seats and tables
- Bit long winded in places – too much detail
- Some of the key facts unknown until 25 November
- We could have had the presentation slides in advance so not everything is off the cuff/missed

- A lot to absorb in a short space of time
- I would have found a paper copy welcome so I could have scribbled comments to remind myself
- As an experienced councillor there were no surprises but I did find the input of others interesting

OPPORTUNITIES

- Provide notes in advance – make sure they are comprehensive x2
- Less headlines and more meat
- Would have been good to have updates to show impact of chancellors announcements in early Oct, as to get a more up to date picture of implications of business rates
- Would be great to get slides at start of meeting to write notes on
- Hard copies of slides please

TRAINING SCORE

Poor	
Adequate	1
Good	2
Very good	11
Excellent	11

FEEDBACK ON TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT

Attended: 11 Returned Feedback forms: 10

Objectives: The session will focus on case studies and what members would take into account in considering an application. Topic areas will include:

- Green belt policy
- Permitted development
- Parking
- Appeal Costs
- Design
- Enforcement

STRENGTHS

- The whole training was really useful and interesting. I've learned that we need to substantiate reasons for refusal better
- All
- The information on Housing and Planning Bill.
- Practical experience working through case studies in groups with planning officers.
- Clear presentation
- Case studies were thought provoking.
- Informative introduction and interesting exercise.
- Lots of good information
- Case studies were valuable
- Spending time with the officers.
- Case studies.
- Update presentation should continue.
- Very useful especially as legislation is moving so fast.
- Very good update on planning matters
- Good direction and help on case study

WEAKNESSES

- Nothing!
- None
- It's a pity that more members did not attend as training session was very useful.
- Unfortunate lack of detail (due to CLG)
- I do not think we should have been asked to act as officers.
- Some of the case studies may need expansion
- Repeat the training at least every six months.

OPPORTUNITIES

- More of these please!
- Planning refresher training including working on case studies to become annual.
- Another presentation in New Year as Bill becomes clearer.
- More information on consistency of recommendations.
- Ditto for weighting of different considerations.
- More exercises would help
- Working with officers and other councillors is a big bonus.
- Similar workshops would be helpful

- Very usual course content.

TRAINING SCORE

Poor	0
Adequate	0
Good	0
Very good	6
Excellent	4

FEEDBACK ON TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT

Attended: 9

Returned Feedback forms: 9

This session will focus on the 'Knowing What Works' programme, which in general terms is about making better use of evidence to design better services. This also includes some internal consultancy work on redesigning services around residents' needs and applying insights from social psychology to make our interactions with residents more effective.

STRENGTHS

- The presenters. Six of the attendees were new councillors.
- Kept to a reasonable time. Explained themselves well. Presenters seemed interested. Presentation was comprehensive.
- Questions to ask of people. Clear explanations.
- Slides very good, presented well.
- Programme was very informative and helps to put in practice, got lots of information.
- Thinking outside the box.
- Importance of measuring outcomes not outputs. To test evidence base of policies, keep asking 'why?' ask for proof over precedent.
- Makes you think through problems.

WEAKNESSES

- Too much sitting and listening. Session is a lecture. Around the room people looked bored. Insufficient attendance.
- Words in grey not always easy to read for visually impaired people.
- What was it all about?
- Lack of a practical session of evidence based decision making.
- Not sure how you would test all data where a pilot is not practical.

OPPORTUNITIES

- Selling the data bank access to all members.
- Would have been fun to do a table top challenge rather than watching a video, people would have been more engaged. More interaction. Send text reminder earlier.
- Some table top exercises would have made the session a bit more interesting.
- We can put this knowledge in practice.
- Would have been helpful for members on development control.

TRAINING SCORE

Poor	0
Adequate	1
Good	3
Very good	3
Excellent	2

16/11/2015

Main Heading	Budget	Sub Heading	Spend	Remaining
<i>Training Course fees</i>	£ 11,000.00			£ 11,000.00
		Local Government Information Unit -Being an effective councillor seminar (x1)	£ 175.00	£ 10,825.00
		Local Government Information Unit -Being an effective councillor seminar (x1)	£ 175.00	£ 10,650.00
		Annual Conference for Councillors x1	£ 110.00	£ 10,540.00
		Licensing training 1/7/15 (10 cllrs)	£ 500.00	£ 10,040.00
		Local Government Association (LGA) seminar x2	£ 990.00	£ 9,050.00
		Bryant Park hospitality ltd - LGA accommadation x2	£ 520.00	£ 8,530.00
		Motts coaches - Induction tour	£ 550.00	£ 7,980.00
		Media training	£ 1,690.00	£ 6,290.00
		Housing appeals training	£ 750.00	£ 5,540.00
		Member Induction lunch (Sat 6 June)	£ 223.50	£ 5,316.50
		Member Induction lunch (Thurs 21 May)	£ 218.00	£ 5,098.50
				£ 5,098.50
		NO SPENDS SINCE LAST MDSG MEETING		£ 5,098.50
				£ 5,098.50
				£ 5,098.50
				£ 5,098.50
				£ 5,098.50
				£ 5,098.50
OVERALL TOTALS:	£ 11,000.00		£ 5,901.50	£ 5,098.50

red italics to be paid

MEMBER DEVELOPMENT DATES 2015/16

Date	Development Event	Start time	Finish time	Run by:	Location	Which Members?
Tuesday 26 May 2015	Development Control Training	7.00 pm	9.00 pm	Steve Clark, Group Manager	Council Chamber	Dev Con Committee
Monday 8 June 2015	Employment Appeals Training	9.30 am	12.00 pm	Anne Stunell, HR B Lisgarten, Legal	Gade Room	Appeals Committee
Wednesday 1 July 2015	Licensing Training	10.00 am	4.00 pm	Ross Hill	Council Chamber	Licensing Committee
*Wednesday 15 July 2015	CIL Briefing	6.00 pm	7.00 pm	James Doe	Bulbourne Room	All
Monday 20 July 2015	Housing Appeals Training (all day session)	9.30 am	4.30 pm	Barbara Lisgarten	Bulbourne Room	Appeals Committee
Wednesday 22 July 2015	Media Training (Cabinet)	9.00 am	5.00 pm	Kelvin Soley/ Media Friendly	Dacorum Room	Cabinet Only
Thursday 23 July 2015	Information Security / Data Protection Awareness	7.00 pm	8.30 pm	John Worts	Bulbourne Room	All
Tuesday 1 September 2015	Voluntary Sector Speed Dating	7.00 pm	9.00 pm	Sharon Collins/Claire Lynch	Bulbourne Room	All
Thursday 10 September 2015	Choice Based Lettings/Housing Allocations Policy	7.30 pm	9.00 pm	Laura Brennan/ Isabel Connolly	Bulbourne Room	All

Thursday 22 October 2015	Budget Setting Process	7.30 pm	9.30 pm	James Deane, Director of Finance	Bulbourne Room	All
Tuesday 3 November 2015	Evidence Based Decision Making	7.30 pm	9.00 pm	Andrew Marsh	Bulbourne Room	All
Thursday 7 January 2016	Housing Service Overview	7.30 pm	9.30 pm	Dharini Chandarana	Bulbourne Room	All
*Wednesday 20 January 2016	Emergency Plan Awareness	6.00 pm	7.00 pm	Sophie Donoghue, Herts Resilience Officer	Bulbourne Room	All
Thursday 11 February 2016	WRAP Training	7.30 pm	9.00 pm	Julie Still	Bulbourne Room	All
Wednesday 23 March 2016						

*** indicates a briefing before full Council meeting**

To be scheduled:

- Mental health first aid – to be rescheduled

Member Development Steering Group Work Programme 2015/16

Meeting Date	Item
4 June 2015	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Annual Training report 2. Members questionnaire Feedback 3. Setting the Member Development Programme 2014/15 4. Quarterly Budget Update 5. MDSG work Programme
1 October 2015	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Annual Training report 2. Member Development Strategy 2015-2018 3. Webpage – ‘How to become a Councillor’ 4. Member Development Programme 5. Quarterly Budget Update 6. Evaluation feedback from previous development sessions 7. MDSG work Programme
2 December 2015	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Personal Development Plans – options 2. Training pledge 3. Member Development Programme 4. Quarterly Budget Update 5. Evaluation feedback from previous development sessions 6. MDSG work Programme
2 March 2016	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Personal Development Plans – feedback 2. MDSG work Programme 3. Member Development Programme 4. Quarterly Budget Update 5. Evaluation feedback from previous development sessions

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